News release

Forewarned is forearmed

4 March 2004

Retailers are increasingly recognising the impact of weather on their profits and are now working with the Met Office to help mitigate those impacts.

The variable British climate, which produced record-breaking temperatures in August last year and the contrasting mild and freezing conditions in January this year, affected British Retail Consortium (BRC) members in many ways. Some large supermarket chains were able to turn the weather to their advantage by quickly gearing up their supply chains to maximise sales opportunities. But a number of companies missed out on opportunities to satisfy consumer demand and increase profitability.

In response to demand from its members, the BRC and the Met Office are now working together to offer a special package of weather services for a variety of retailers. BRC Weather Analysis is the latest membership service offer from the BRC which provides a range of weather forecasting products for all business needs.

John Cormode, Chief Executive of BRC Trading Ltd said: "Our members, from trade associations through mid-tier retailers to large supermarket chains are aware that the weather has a significant impact on consumer behaviour, which in turn affects what they need to buy, how much and when. But very few retailers have the information at their fingertips to help them understand the specific relationship between the weather and demand for their products."

Richard Bennett, Met Office's retail manager said: "All weather types can impact on a retailer's business. In an increasingly competitive business environment, an understanding of weather and its effects will become more and more crucial to retail supply chain, marketing and general planning decisions, bringing with it improved efficiency and greater profits."

More on services for retail and manufacturing

Notes:

About the Met Office

The Met Office is a world leader in the provision of advice on the weather and the natural environment. For 150 years, it has been the UK's national weather service, providing services to government departments and companies in commerce, industry and the media. However, the Met Office does not just focus on 'the weather'. It looks at the impacts of the weather on business and the environment and has expanded into providing environmental science services, including hydrology and oceanography. The Met Office is also expanding its international operations and is extending co-operation and forging partnerships within the international 'weather' communities.

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About British Retail Consortium

The British Retail Consortium (BRC) is the lead trade association representing the whole range of retailers, from the large multiples and department stores through to independents, selling a wide selection of products through centre of town, out of town, rural and virtual stores.

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